

2017 AES CONVENTION REPORT: **New Gear In New York!**

# RECORDING

The magazine for the recording musician®

## THE RHYTHM OF THE BEAT

**Track Great Drums With  
These Tips And Tools!**

**GEORGE MASSENBURG**

**On Recording Drums For  
Toontrack Superior Drummer 3**

**BEFORE RECORDING:**

**What Drummers And  
Engineers Need to Know**

**ONE KIT + TWO MICS =  
Pro-Quality Drums At Home**

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# DPA Microphones

## d:vice MMA-A

*Impeccable stereo field recording  
that fits in the palm of your hand*

REVIEW BY PAUL VNUK JR.

The Danish firm DPA Microphones is well known for ultra-clean, extra-real and yet ultra-musical microphones... that for the most part are also ultra-small when compared to much of the competition. In keeping with that theme, the DPA miniature mic line uses a Microdot connector system, which is sturdy, reliable, and offers a high level of versatility in regard to positioning, function and use. With product names like d:vote, d:dicate, d:fine, d:facto, d:screet, and d:mension, DPA also loves d:naming scheme it came up with.

This month we are looking at the latest DPA device—the d:vice. It's one of the company's first products that is not a microphone; it's a digital audio interface that puts a pair of high-quality microphone preamps and a crystal-clear A/D converter into a portable audio interface that's iOS-friendly in addition to working via USB. What's more, in keeping with DPA's love of miniature products, the entire d:vice is just slightly bigger than a fifty-cent piece! It measures 2.2" in diameter and is less than 1/2" thick.

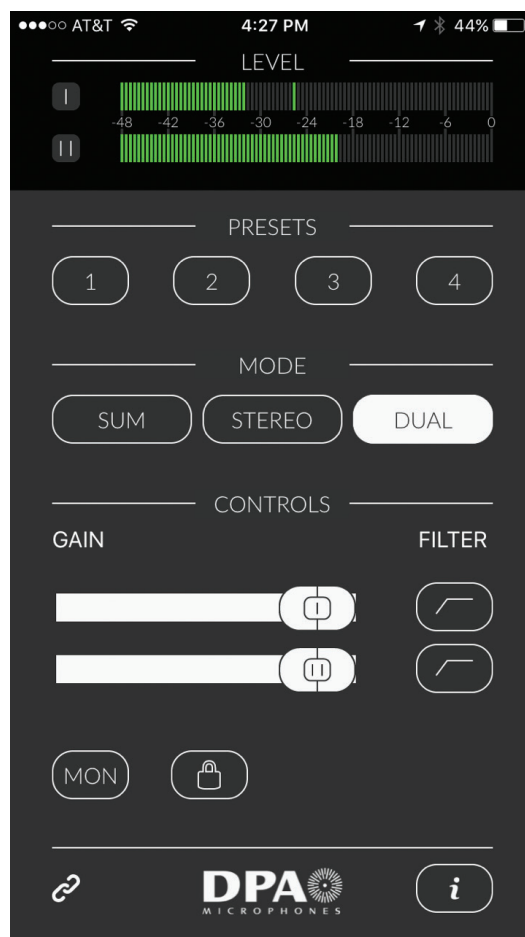
Some relevant specs: noise floor of -114 dBFS (A-weighted), frequency range of 20 Hz–22 kHz ±0.2 dB (48 kHz) or 20 Hz–40 kHz ±0.2 dB (96 kHz), total harmonic distortion under -100 dB, 0.001% @ 1 kHz @ -10 dBFS, typical dynamic range of 114 dB, full-scale output of 1V rms @ 0 dB gain, and sample rates from 44.1 to 96 kHz at 24-bit resolution.

On the physical side, the small black and silver metal d:vice has no buttons or switches on its body. Instead all functions are controlled by a custom app downloadable from Apple's App store. The d:vice offers three physical connections. First, it has a Micro-B USB port that can be connected to any current iOS device (iPhone or iPad) with a Micro-USB-to-Lightning cable, or to a Mac or PC via Micro-USB-to-USB cable. The other two connections are a pair of the aforementioned Microdot connectors; the d:vice is custom-made for use with two of any appropriately Microdot-equipped DPA microphones.

### What's app-enig ?

The d:vice works with iOS 10 or later and is bus powered only. Qualified iOS devices include the 6th Generation iPod touch, iPad Mini 4, iPad Air or newer, and iPhone 5 or newer.

The app is simple yet perfectly designed to offer everything you need for iOS recording. There are gain controls for each mic, complete with an 80 Hz highpass filter on each channel. You can use one mic and record in mono, two mics in stereo, or in dual mode which makes the app act as a 2-channel mixer. You can store up to four presets for quick recall with your chosen mics and recording/camera apps, and it even has a detailed 2-channel peak level meter. There is also a lock function which keeps your settings from being messed with by other apps.



If you are a laptop person, you can also use the d:vice with your favorite audio capture program as well. It pairs wonderfully with a small MacBook Air.

## Applications

The d:vice was originally developed for the growing mobile electronic news gathering (ENG) crowd, such as modern-day reporters, bloggers and videographers. While the iPhone's video camera gets better and better—all of my YouTube videos for *Recording* are shot with an iPhone 7—the onboard mic is quite low-quality. For this reason, many people have become used to traveling with a second audio recorder in addition to their iPhone and/or camera.

The d:vice eliminates this need and turns your iDevice into a high-end digital audio capture device capable of 24/96 recording (as long as your recording app supports it). This is a good place to remind readers that the d:vice is an interface, and its app doesn't have any recording or editing capability. It's designed to work with pretty much any app that can talk to a class-compliant Core Audio interface rather than being dedicated to particular proprietary hardware.

Since the d:vice has a large family of DPA mics to choose from, you can use it with a d:screet lavalier mic, a d:fine over-the-ear headset, a d:vote instrument mic... even DPA's larger d:icate mics can be used as room mics. What's even cooler is that you do not have to use these mics in pairs and can mix and match for your chosen application.

If you are wondering, "Why are we talking about ENG in *Recording*?", here are a few use cases that are applicable to our world. I have been using the d:vice with a pair of DPA's 2011 mics on a stereo bar for field recording and sound design capture. I love that the d:vice, which comes with its own high-quality nylon case plus both mics and bar, all fit in a 7" x 2" x 2" box. I also do a fair amount of audio for video, and again this is a very convenient setup with a shotgun mic and lav mic combo.

Bottom line, it sounds fantastic and holds its own sonically with every other device in its class on the recording interface side—think Apogee or Grace

Design—as well as the mobile ENG side, like Sound Devices.

The only issue I have with the d:vice is that it lacks a headphone output. That's essential when recording audio in the field; you don't want to wait until you get back to the studio to know if the audio you captured is any good! To be fair, it is not DPA's fault that Apple killed the headphone jack on the iPhone 7 and above. I am not sure that one of the various headphone splitter/adaptor cables for the iPhone 7 will be a reliable solution for a d:vice plus headphones due to power considerations. However, the d:vice will work side by side

with Bluetooth headphones; that's how I used my review unit with my iPhone 7. If you own an iPhone 5, 5S, 6/6 Plus, SE, 6S/6S Plus, or any iPad, this is a non-issue.

Headphone issue aside, the d:vice is an amazing piece of gear, a significant step up in quality and portability in the world of iPhone and iPad audio capture. It's not cheap, but genuinely high-end audio gear rarely is. ➔

PRICE: \$659.95

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